

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, NU

SUBJECT: LIBERAL PARTY PLOTTING

SUMMARY. MEMBER OF LIBERTY PARTY (PLN) DIRECTIVE BOARD INFORMED AMBASSADOR THAT SEVERAL LIBERAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES BELIEVE SOMOZA MAY NEED TO BE PRESSURED TO ACCEPT ACCOMMODATION FOLLOWING CURRENT NATIONAL STRIKE. HE LOOKS TO U.S. TO BACK CONCILIATION EFFORTS. IF THESE EFFORTS ARE UNSUCCESSFUL HE BELIEVES HIS GROUP HAS THE NUMBERS IN CONGRESS TO VOTE SOMOZA OUT OF OFFICE. END SUMMARY.

1. PLN SENATOR WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE DIRECTIVE BOARD, AND HAS A HISTORY OF INDEPENDENT THINKING WITHIN THE PARTY SOUGHT A MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 8 WITH AMBASSADOR. HE EXPLAINED HE AND SEVERAL OTHER PLN REPRESENTATIVES SEE THE POSSIBILITY THAT, FOLLOWING THE CURRENT NATIONAL STRIKE, SOMOZA MIGHT TRY TO CRUSH THE OPPOSITION. HE VIEWS THIS POSSIBILITY AS DISASTROUS FOR THE FUTURE OF NICARAGUA, AND BELIEVES THIRD PARTY MEDIATION IS NECESSARY TO FORCE RECIPROCAL CONCESSIONS AND RESTORE SOME SEMBLANCE OF PEACE. HE ADMITTED THE LIBERALS ARE VERY NERVOUS ABOUT THE CURRENT TREND.

2. THE SENATOR REFERRED TO HIS PLAN TO ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT

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THE CHURCH TO ACT AS A MEDIATOR IN THE CONFLICT AND WAS APPARENTLY SEEKING USG REINFORCEMENT OF HIS INITIATIVE. AMBASSADOR SAID THE COSTA RICAN INITIATIVE WAS ALREADY LAUNCHED AND PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER TO THROW THE WEIGHT OF THIS PLN GROUP BEHIND THIS INITIATIVE. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED USG BACKED COSTA RICAN INITIATIVE. THE SENATOR AGREED AND SAID HE WOULD POLL HIS COLLEAGUES

AND IF THERE WERE SUFFICIENT SUPPORT, HE WOULD ASK TO SEE SOMOZA TO EXPRESS PLN SUPPORT FOR MEDIATION INITIATIVE. AMBASSADOR TOLD THE SENATOR IT WOULD BE BETTER TO REFER TO PRESS ACCOUNTS OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR COSTA RICAN INITIATIVE RATHER THAN THIS MEETING AS SOMOZA WAS VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT PLN-EMBASSY CONTACTS.

3. THE SENATOR THEN OUTLINE WHAT HE REFERRED TO AS "PLAN 2." HE SAID IF SOMOZA SHOULD BE INTRANSIGENT ON MEDIATION AND CONCESSIONS, HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES BELIEVED THEY WOULD HAVE TO ACT IN THE CONGRESS TO OUST SOMOZA (I.E. VOTE THAT HE IS UNABLE TO SERVE-ARTICLE 187). HE SAID THEY HAVE THE REQUISITE NUMBER OF VOTES (ELEVEN) WHICH COMBINED WITH THE CONSERVATIVES (PCN) WOULD CONSTITUTE A MAJORITY. HE SAID THEY HAD SPOKEN WITH THE PCN AND HAD CAREFULLY CONSIDERED ALL THE PARLIAMENTARY AND OTHER PITFALLS WITH THIS COURSE OF ACTION. THEIR ONLY CONCERNS ARE HOW THE NATIONAL GUARD WOULD REACT AND ASSUME SOMOZA WOULD TRY TO HAVE THE DISSIDENTS ARRESTED, AND HOW THE U.S. WOULD REACT WHICH, IF SWIFT ENOUGH, MIGHT TIP THE SCALES IN THEIR FAVOR.

4. AMBASSADOR SAID HE WAS NOT ABLE TO EXPRESS USG REACTION TO THIS PROPOSAL. POLOFF OPINED THAT USG WOULD LIKELY SUPPORT EFFORTS BASED ON THE CONSTITUTION TO FIND A POLITICAL SOLUTION, ALTHOUGH USG WOULD NOT WANT TO BE THE SECRET

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INITIATOR OF ANY SUCH INITIATIVE. AMBASSADOR SAID, HOWEVER, USG ATTENTION IS CURRENTLY FOCUSED ON THE MEDIATION INITIATIVE.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT APPROACH BY PLN SENATOR WAS SINCERE AND THAT HIS "PLAN 2" MAY IN HIS VIEW BE A POSSIBILITY. HOWEVER, WE VIEW THE LIKELIHOOD THAT "PLAN 2" MIGHT BE SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED WITH SKEPTICISM (THE ABORTED COUP PLOT READILY IS RECALLED). THIS SOLUTION, IF IT WERE LIKELY TO HAVE ANY REAL CHANCE OF SUCCESS, WOULD PROBABLY REQUIRE AND EARLY INDICATION U.S. WOULD BE PREPARED TO REACT FAVORABLY TO THE INITIATIVE, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN OR OBTAIN SUFFICIENT VOTES. WE PLAN TO CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO HIM STATING THAT OUR POLICY IS TO PROMOTE A PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC CHANGE, WHICH OBVIOUSLY MEANS CHANGE THAT IS LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL. SOLAUN

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